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Cue health test

For some, watching the Super Bowl is less about football than about the famously over-the-top, hilarious, touching, and/or celebrity-laden commercials. One that has already gotten people talking is the commercial for Cue, the at-home Covid-19 test kit featuring Gal Gadot as the voice of the “Cue” device. What is this new contraption? Does Cue really work? Is Cue available for purchase? If so, how much is it? Here’s what you need to know.Cue is a self-contained Covid test kitIt is composed of a reader and single use cartridges and wands. Users place the cartridge in the reader, swab their nose as they would with a traditional at-home test, and then put the wand in the cartridge. In 20 minutes, a result will be sent via the Cue Health app right to the user’s phone or other digital device. An independent study by the Mayo Clinic found that Cue tests were more than 97% accurate when compared to a molecular lab test. According to reporting from the New York Times, most home rapid antigen tests (aka the kind of home test you’ve probably administered on yourself), are about 85% accurate overall, though data from the CDC suggests this number could be lower in real-world use.The device is authorized for at-home and professional use for those over the age of 2According to the company’s website, Cue was certified by the FDA’s Emergency Use Authorization for professional use such as community health clinics, doctor’s offices, nursing homes, and correctional facilities — in June 2020 and for commercial use in homes and other non-clinical settings since March 2021. This is particularly useful for rural communities, tribal nations — where access to laboratories might be limited — and large corporate and governmental agency offices. The cost will be prohibitively expensive for most familiesWhen it comes to price, Cue costs from anywhere between $444 (the reader and three tests) and $854.05 (the reader and 10 tests; currently discounted from $899). Tests can be purchased separately at a cost of $195 for three and $617.50 for 10 (currently discounted from the usual $650).The reason the Cue is so much more expensive that typical at-home rapid antigen tests (which usually cost between $13 and $30) is that Cue is a completely different test: a molecular test, which detects genetic material of Covid (RNA) whereas antigen tests detect (you guessed it) antigens. “Molecular tests are the most sensitive, or “gold standard,” diagnostic tests for COVID-19,” the company writes on its FAQs page. “Antigen tests are generally less sensitive than molecular tests, and give more false negative results, especially in people who are asymptomatic.”A membership is available for an additional feeMembership comes in two varieties — Cue+ Essential for $39.99 a month and Cue+ Complete for $74.99 a month. Both entitle members to Covid tests (10 for Essential, 20 for Complete), 24/7 virtual care via the app, a 20% discount off additional tests, and $100 off the Cue reader. Complete has the added benefit of providing CDC-compliant supervised tests for travel, school, or work.Social media has had mixed opinionsAs with anything having to do with Covid in general, reaction to the Cue has been mixed. Most commentary seems to be discussion of the cost of Cue.“An at home Covid test smart device called CUE advertised during the Super Bowl costs $250 for device and $195 for three single use tests. Just your normal horrors of capitalism,” writes Twitter user @where_is_gary.“If you just saw the Cue Health COVID-19 testing commercial…lol,” tweets @TommyGarrettPFN. “It’s also either $40 or $75 a month on membership. This is the cost of refills. I’ll stay broke, I’m good.”Others were skeptical the Cue would even work.“This Cue Covid test thing feels very Theranos-like,” tweeted @BenBrownPL, referencing Elizabeth Holmes’ blood test that alleged to be able to do blood tests with a single drop of blood, but never actually delivered on its promise.Some social media users immediately took the opportunity to launch into conspiracy theories about the device, while others had a chuckle about the fact that it seemed like conspiracy-included folks would, indeed, become hysterically leery of Cue.“You’ll never convince me that naming the Covid robot Cue/Q isn’t an intentional choice designed to drive the Qanon people wild,” tweets @jitka.Others had more lighthearted fun, such as @enteedrums, who compared Cue to the box used in the Gom Jabbar test, a painful trial of endurance as seen in Dune.Cue will no doubt see a bump in sales after the ad watched by tens of millions of viewers, but given the price it’s hard to image that a Cue will be in every home just yet. Transform with Google CloudGlobal Lead, MedTech Strategy and Solutions, Google CloudGet unmatched cloud technology built on Google’s infrastructure.Learn more Editor's note: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cue Health, inventors of the portable Cue Health Monitoring System and Cue COVID-19 At-Home Test, engaged Google Cloud to help quickly transform and scale their back-end operations. The company had largely been in research-and-Development mode since its founding in 2010 and needed to shift to commercial mode, manufacturing and deploying millions of Cue units across the United States, almost overnight. Cue’s primary goal has been to make simple, remote diagnostic testing more accessible and affordable. Yet an even more important mission was at work, especially during the pandemic: helping public health officials and researchers gain a fuller picture of community health. Cue leveraged Google Cloud’s secure infrastructure to immediately help scale, store, and protect critical data that offered officials a more timely and accurate picture of the COVID-19 pandemic. This data also provides constant feedback to help ensure Cue’s tests continue to be among the most accurate COVID-19 self-test available to users.This is the story of how they did it.Modern microbiology began in the 17th century with the discovery of bacteria. Two centuries later, as Louis Pasteur applied the principles of microbiology to explore the relationship between germs and disease, he struggled to trace the cause of rabies—a virus too small to be detected using standard equipment of the day. Through four years of tireless experimentation, however, Pasteur found that a weakened extract of rabies-infected tissue might protect against it. What many consider the first vaccine was born. After this breakthrough, scientists continued to search experimentally for answers until the 1930s, when the invention of electron microscopy allowed them to see and study the contagium vivum fluidum, or virus, so they could develop vaccine improvements.It’s hard to imagine that conquering COVID-19 might take decades or even centuries, when to a weary public, each additional day of the pandemic seems endless. For modern health warriors to make progress against a virus, they need to do more than see it, identify its properties, and run experiments to find treatments. Collecting and analyzing data is becoming one of the most powerful ways to track the trajectory of a pathogen and to understand which therapies neutralize it most effectively. Thus far, timely and comprehensive data has proved elusive during the pandemic, helping it rage on for more than two years.For all the advances made since Pasteur’s time, the reasons for our data being disconnected, even when there is so much of it available, is quite clear: “The majority of the healthcare diagnostics infrastructure we rely on today is built on systems that were established decades ago,” says Chris Achar, chief strategy officer at Cue Health.Achar describes the traditional diagnostic process: patients make an appointment, visit their healthcare professional, and provide samples that their doctor’s office couriers to a centralized lab. It can take days and even a week for a test result to come back, at which point the doctor informs the patient and recommends a treatment. Diagnostic data is typically centralized with patients having limited to no access.During the COVID-19 pandemic, time gaps have caused obvious problems for public health officials. The weeks it may take between initial symptoms and final test results became a chasm that left room for mutations to spread before the public even knew they existed. “The average turnaround time for sequencing data in this country is 28 days,” Achar explains. “Delta became the dominant variant within 30 days.” By the time health officials recognized Delta, it had already taken hold.As variants like Omicron emerged, people, desperate to stay healthy, scrambled for rapid antigen tests they could take at home. While faster than traditional lab diagnostics, these paper tests aren't as reliable. Moreover, many people don’t report positive results, leaving public health officials blind to the true positivity rate, location, and velocity of spread. Thus, when mutations arise unexpectedly, the tools officials use to counter them rely on mostly outdated information. “It’s resulted in a huge blind spot across the country,” Achar says. When people fall ill with COVID-like symptoms, they need fast and accurate testing and diagnosis. Likewise, health officials need fast, accurate and connected data reporting so that they can formulate a response in time to make a difference. Unless we cross the data chasm, society will remain at the mercy of every new phase of this pandemic—and of every pandemic that follows.Pioneering at-home molecular testingCue Health has been pioneering technology to provide at-home molecular testing since 2010. The founders, Ayub Khattak and Clint Sever, started the company after observing the H1N1 pandemic, better known as the 2009 Swine Flu outbreak, and the lack of diagnostic capability that existed at the point of care at that time. “They wanted to create something that was fast, field deployable, reliable, and had the ability to connect data back into the public healthcare system,” Achar says, “something that could be used by both healthcare professionals and ultimately consumers alike, with a platform capability to do a number of molecular assays.”The result of their efforts is the Cue Health Monitoring System based on the Cue Reader, a portable, Bluetooth-operated, rechargeable device. The Cue Test Cartridge, a single-use disposable unit that contains all the chemistry and components needed to run a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT). Lastly, there’s the Cue Health App, a mobile app that can be downloaded and not only allows users to manage their test results but also conduct a supervised test if needed, connect to a doctor via in-app virtual care, and also enables e-prescription capabilities.Usage is very easy: simply insert a new cartridge into the Cue Reader, collect a sample with a provided wand, and insert into the cartridge. The Cue App does the rest. “The Cue Reader is connected to the mobile app via bluetooth and integrated into e-prescription and healthcare systems,” Achar explains. Cue Health de-identifies test results to analyze near real-time trends, providing valuable insight for public health officials.Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cue had already been working with the Biomedical Advanced Research Development Authority (BARDA), a division of U.S. Health and Human Services that focuses on advancing healthcare technology. BARDA was interested in Cue’s technology as part of ongoing U.S. healthcare infrastructure with a focus on pandemic response. Through this relationship, Cue Health was one of the few companies able to access the genome sequence for COVID-19 as soon as it became available in early 2020. Because the Cue Health Monitoring System was designed from the start to be adaptable, Cue Health engineers only needed to change the chemistry inside the cartridges to create a new set that could detect COVID-19. Within three weeks, they had a high-performing test, which would go on to become the first molecular diagnostic product for consumer home use to be authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.Validated by an independent clinical study at the Mayo Clinic, the Cue Health COVID-19 test is 97.8% accurate when compared to lab-based PCR. “People can now run a COVID-19 test anywhere using the Cue Reader,” Achar says, “and have lab-quality molecular test results delivered digitally to their mobile device in about 20 minutes.” Meeting Pandemic-level DemandWhile developing an accurate and reliable COVID-19 test was the most important step, it was only the first one. Demand for this test could extend far beyond a few people or populations in a few geographic regions. Communities and countries across the planet could all benefit from a new kind of test. The next—and far more daunting—hurdle would be to manufacture, distribute, and process the number of tests that fighting a global pandemic requires.“We looked at a problem that was playing out in society and said there's got to be a better way,” Ayub Khattak, one of the co-founders and CEO of Cue Health says. “We set about bringing together and creating the right technologies that would solve the problem.” With a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to build Cue Health’s pandemic infrastructure, the company sought help exploring and addressing all the issues they would face in transforming their operations from R&D to commercial scale.“COVID-19 and swine flu shined a light on a very basic problem of healthcare information access,” Khattak says. “We needed to build a product that scaled.” Cue Health knew they couldn’t scale their on-premises infrastructure fast enough to meet the incredible demand headed their way, particularly given healthcare’s stringent requirements around privacy and security. To realize their vision, Cue Health engaged Google Cloud to help move their existing environment to the cloud. They began with a centralized healthcare data lake capable of storing the vast amounts of test result data that would be necessary to create an accurate picture of the pandemic.“To earn the confidence of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense, we had to share our data compliance and approach around security, HIPAA, scalability, and redundancy,” Achar explains. “Google Cloud was great for that, but also internationally, because you have to domicile health data in each of the different territories where you get approved. With Google Cloud, we don’t have to recreate the wheel every time. We’re able to separate data and domicile it within Google Cloud's capability in, say, Canada or Singapore, or wherever we get authorizations."Cue Health also chose Google Cloud because of its native support for industry-specific data standards such as HL7v2 and FHIR, plus pre-built HIPAA-compliant environments, which made rapid scaling across environments vastly easier. Google Cloud also simplifies secure access for patients and caregivers to time-sensitive data, as well as making that data de-identified with the Google Cloud Healthcare API, so it’s accessible to researchers to perform near real-time analysis of health-related trends. “It’s the 21st century,” Achar said. “Our health data, something that’s so personal and that’s ours, should be more easily accessible. Google Cloud gave us the scalability we needed, and also the security we needed, because what happens to people’s data and where it gets reported is such an important topic.” Using Data to Stay AheadWhat’s more, Cue now offers its customers the ability to have their positive COVID sample sequenced through a seperate in-home Cue Sequencing Collection Kit. Once sequenced, genomic data, stored in Google Cloud, can be analyzed at a vast scale using advanced AI and machine learning tools. “We have this idea that if you can bring in more sequencing information, and if you can connect it to other important data layers, then you can make more meaning out of the information to predict what's going to happen in the future,” Khattak says.Now that their portable testing solution is publicly available, Cue Health hopes that broad adoption will make lab-quality testing available to communities that don’t have access to diagnostic lab facilities, reduce the time it takes to identify a new variant to 10 days or fewer, and help the medical community determine which populations are at higher risk and which types of individuals respond best to specific types of treatments. “We’re deployed in a number of underserved communities, rural communities, and even tribal locations,” Achar says. “That's a huge step forward for people who may not otherwise have access to molecular PCR lab-quality testing.“By crossing the data chasm, public health officials can take precise, preventative action that helps everyone, instead of swinging way too blindly, way too late, for far too many people. “As we’ve announced with Google Cloud, we're building a dashboard that could be used by public health officials,” Achar says. “We envision a mini-mesh sonar network that can show when positivity is increasing in one region as opposed to another, which will help public health officials decide where to deploy more antiviral and surge response teams.“To scientists who have walked in Pasteur’s footsteps, disease is a complex structure to unravel, a potentially life-altering human condition that demands relief. But studying disease requires more than learning its biological makeup. We must understand how a disease starts and spreads, and how it affects individuals and populations, so we can learn how to stop it. Every month, week, day, or minute sooner that pioneers like Cue Health can deliver crucial diagnostic data to caregivers and scientists, the more they can help an exhausted medical community get ahead of this public health crisis—and stay ahead for the next.“The implication of having connectivity, data, and being able to take better action not just for the pandemic, but for health in general, is huge,” Achar says. “This is the tip of the iceberg right now.”Posted inTransform with Google Cloud Working from home has shown us how much greater things can be if we can access them from home. We can order groceries to our doorsteps, meet people virtually through dating apps, and even work out without leaving our basements. Yet in light of all these advancements comes a dearth in terms of home healthcare. Thankfully, Cue Health is looking to change that with their FDA-approved rapid at-home COVID tests. They’re trusted by Google’s corporate heads, the MLB, and more major associations as well as earning over 21k Instagram followers. My Cue Health review will look at how the company can keep you and your family informed as to your COVID-19 status, how their products work, and whether customers think they’re worth your time. Ayub Khattak and Clint Sever established Cue Health in San Diego, California in 2010 to simplify the diagnostic process for customers. They put their technical expertise to the test and strived to find a way to use it to the benefit of those around them. Their developments include molecular testing devices that people can use safely from their homes, workplaces, or anywhere that isn’t the doctor’s office. This expands how many people can be covered by health care and how many people can receive the aid they require. Cue Health really planted their flag on the map when they developed the first COVID-19 test that could be used from home, acquired over-the-counter, and was accredited by the FDA. It was a huge victory in terms of how people could combat the pandemic by checking their own infection status. Seeing as how simple their tests are and how rapidly they deliver results, it’s no wonder that they’ve become the go-to brand by some of the world’s most powerful corporations. Air Canada, NBA, WNBA, Netflix, and the U.S. Department of Health and Safety have all used Cue Health’s products. It’s easy to admire Cue Health for how they’ve helped the world lurch back to normalcy in the wake of the pandemic, but we’re not out of the fire yet. There’s still more we can do to keep ourselves healthy, and that’s how Cue Health can come in handy. The next part of this Cue Health review will cover just how they can help you stay safe. Created the first FDA-approved at-home COVID testCan provide 24/7 access to doctors and pediatriciansMultiple people can sign up under the same Cue Health membership planThey are a more reliable distributor of COVD-19 testsCan deliver your test results in as little as 20 minutes Currently, Cue Health develops COVID-19 tests, an app, and liaisons between doctors, pediatricians, and clients. Cue Health COVID Test The first item I’ll include in this Cue Health review is one that I can’t stress enough about how important it is. Even now it can be difficult to obtain a rapid COVID test depending on where you live unless you want to pay through the nose – and you need that to breathe. That’s why I’m happy the Cue Health COVID Test makes testing rapid and accessible for more people. It’s been certified by the FDA and does not require a prescription to use. However, you must use it alongside the Cue Health Cue Reader, which is not included with this purchase. This product can detect SARS-CoV-2 in your body at even the smallest level. It should be able to pick up on any variants so you won’t need to fret if you’re worried you might have later strains like Omicron or Delta. It can detect the virus even if you’re asymptomatic which, and I cannot stress this enough, is massive. Many people carry COVID asymptomatically and can potentially pass it on to their loved ones. It’s only when someone they know tests positive that they test themselves, but by then it may be too late. You should receive the results of your COVID test in as little as 20 minutes. They’ll be delivered right to your phone through the Cue Health App. The Cue Health COVID Test can be done by adults by themselves with a simple swab. Each package contains a different amount of nasal swabs. A 3-pack of Cue Health COVID Test swabs costs $195 and a 10-pack costs $618, which is a reduction on the regular $650 price. Cue Health Monitoring System Now that I’ve covered the brand’s specific COVID tests, I’m going to walk through how the company’s membership plans work in the next portion of my Cue Health review. The Cue Health Monitoring System is an all-encompassing entity that refers to how each of Cue Health’s services works in conjunction. It covers everything from self-administering tests to delivering results. I’ll be breaking down the two main membership plans so that you can learn how they differ. Before that, I wanted to tell you how they overlap. These are the features that the Cue Health Essential membership and the Cue Health Complete membership have in common. Each plan provides a bevy of benefits for a monthly payment. Probably the biggest advantage of either plan is their ability to connect you with trusted health professionals. Doctors and pediatricians are only a fingertip away. They’re available to speak with you around the clock seven days a week. Think about how many people – yourself included – could benefit from being able to speak with a medical professional the instant they believe their system has been compromised. This is even better given how it plays into the company’s rapid COVID-19 tests. 24/7 unlimited access to a doctor can reduce anxiety around the virus that many people still aren’t entirely sure how to deal with. Learning that you’ve become infected can catch many people off-guard. Thankfully, if you do test positive, you can speak with a doctor within minutes and learn what you should do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe until you recover. You can also contact pediatricians who can refill your prescriptions and ship them to you in less time than it takes to pop a bagel into the toaster. That’s great for people who are so busy they don’t even have the spare time to blink. A single Cue Health+ membership can cover your entire family. You can create a different profile for everyone in your immediate family. Not only is this useful because it means that you won’t accidentally be sharing prescriptions with your grandmother, but it ensures that more people can get the care they need. You can also review all the necessary precautions you’ll need before you travel with a health professional. The world is re-opening more every day, which is a good thing, but it means that we need to be diligent about how that affects travel. Cue Health’s team can help you complete all the testing you need to get onboard international and return flights to the United States. Regardless of which plan you sign up for, you’ll receive a Cue Health Reader for $149, which is much more affordable than its retail price. Normally, it’d cost $249 to buy it outright, so you’re saving yourself quite a fair bit of money. Both plans also grant you a 20% discount on all Cue Health COVID Tests and free shipping. Those small savings can add up in the long term. The two plans require you to commit to a 12-month subscription when you sign up even though you’ll still be paying in monthly installments. With the similarities out of the way, let’s examine the differences between the Cue Health Essential plan and the Cue Health Complete plan. Cue Health Essential The Cue Health Essential plan can be considered the more basic of the two subscriptions. It provides you with 10 COVID tests for every 12 months you are signed up for the program. Sadly, these tests do not comply with the CDC’s requirements for work, school, or travel, so you’ll still have to seek those out if you wish to engage in any of those activities. This plan usually costs $50 per month but you can sign up now and only pay $40 every month. Cue Health Complete By paying more, you can earn more with this Cue Health option. The Cue Health Complete plan is an expanded version of its contemporary. You can receive 20 Cue Health COVID Tests during your year-long membership. You’ll get 10 when you sign up and another 10 after you’ve passed the 180-day threshold with the plan. The main reason why you’d want to sign up for the Cue Health Complete plan is that their tests are compliant with the CDC’s regulations in regard to work, travel, and school. Regularly, this plan retails at $90 every month, but Cue Health is offering it at a discount of $75. Cue Health Complete You’ll be able to access the Cue Health App when you purchase a Cue Health Reader. The app’s main purpose is to make it easier for you to understand the results of your test. The app is designed with a user-friendly interface that boldly displays the health information you want to know about yourself. It uses Bluetooth to speak with the Cue Health Reader and learn your results. This app can connect with up to 6 Cue readers at once, meaning that you can use it in business or familial settings. Finally, the Cue Health App can give you a clear line of contact with doctors or pediatricians. Since it has all your health information in its private database, it should be easier for you to communicate with your doctors about what ailments you’re facing and what your health is really like. Cue Health has a simple process once you understand it. It can seem esoteric at first when you look at the app, the tests, and the readers, and scratch your head about how they could possibly work together. Essentially, Cue Health makes testing and learning your results simple. Here’s the process in a nutshell: Select one of the brand’s single-use cartridges to take a nasal swab and test for a specific health conditionInsert your swap into the Cue Health ReaderThe Reader will send your results to the Cue Health AppFollow up with a doctor or a pediatrician following the results of your test As I said, it’s simple. There really isn’t much more to it than that, and I believe that healthcare should be that simple to understand. There are plenty of people who could benefit from having more healthcare in the palm of their hands. I’ve already mentioned in this Cue Health review how the company’s business model allows busy people to find ways to fit doctor’s appointments into their day. I also want to mention that people who live far away from a doctor or pediatrician would appreciate Cue Health. It’s easy to forget that easy healthcare is a privilege for many people as opposed to a right. Cue Health can break down many of the physical barriers that prevent people from contacting their doctors. They also break down barriers for people who are immunocompromised, disabled, or physically ill and cannot see doctors in person. It was tough to find many Cue Health reviews that were written by consumers as opposed to those written by large corporations. I stayed away from major publications because it’s difficult to assess whether their reviews are paid promotions. Plus, they usually don’t capture the average user’s experience. That’s why I consulted the customer scores on the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store. Here were the scores that users left for the brand on those platforms: Over 4,800 users gave Cue Health a 4.9/5 stars average score on the Apple App StoreOver 550 users gave Cue Health a 4.5/5 stars average score on the Google Play Store I found common praises on both platforms. The majority of customers appreciated how the apps mitigated the need to leave the house and deal with the regular woes of a doctor’s appointment. There were no more lines, no more waiting rooms, and no more overworked nurses. Some customers also mentioned that the brand offered free replacement tests if the test results were incorrect. This must be due to the fact that faulty tests are a given no matter how high their accuracy and customers were grateful that Cue Health helped people cover their losses. This is how one user described their experience using the Cue Health app:“It’s super easy to use, only take 20 minutes to get the results, and I could send a screenshot to whoever I was going to meet that day. The ease of mind and the sense of control of my day was just amazing. Every traveler and every home should have one.” Another user said that the app accommodated their disability and they recommended it to everyone who suffered from similar impairments. “Truly appreciate the accessibility features of this test. This is currently the only test available for someone to use who is blind so that they can independently administer and read results privately and independently” Some users on the Google Play store said that the Cue Health app had some glitches, but the company is constantly releasing updated patches to work on these problems. Plus, these problems weren’t consistent for all users, as one 5/5 stars Cue Health review writer said in their testimonial:“I got very good results using this kit. Did 4 tests in a row for the whole family. No glitches using the app even after the phone screen is locked. I could switch to other apps while the test was in progress.“ I thought that I would find more negative Cue Health reviews, but were ultimately relieved when the majority of them glowed with praise. Besides the few critiques of the app’s functionality on the Google Play store, I can’t think of any reason to distrust this app. I believe that Cue Health is worth looking into if you are someone who wants to get back into the world while remaining cognizant of your responsibility to keep those around you safe. I mentioned a few times throughout this Cue Health review that some of their products and plans are currently available for a discounted price. I’m not sure how long these promotions will last so I’d recommend that you look into them as soon as you can. You can only purchase Cue Health’s products through their website, cuehealth.com. ACME Capital owns the majority of Cue Health’s shares. Cue Health will keep all your information private and secure. They will only distribute the information that you consent them to and will only share it with healthcare professionals. You can cancel your Cue Health subscription at any time, but you will not receive a refund on the payments you’ve already made. You must sign up for a year-long membership, but since you can pay in monthly installments then you shouldn’t get roped into buying a year’s worth of subscriptions at once. I’m going to wrap up this Cue Health review by telling you how you can contact the company if you have any questions or concerns: Chat with them on their websiteEmail them at Call them at 833.CUE.TEST (833.283.8378) Their customer service workers are available to speak from 5:00 am to 6:00 pm PT. Check out similar brands you might like: Zion Health Review Lemonaid Health Review Simple Health Birth Control Review Elysium Health Review I’ve tried a dozen at-home Covid tests over the past year. If it’s on the shelf at a drugstore, pharmacy, or grocery store, I’ve probably used it multiple times. But whenever I open a test like BinaxNow or QuickVue, I still reach for the instruction manual, mostly out of fear that I’ll mess up a crucial step. It’s been a constant reminder of why I prefer using Cue Health’s Cue Reader diagnostic tool over any other at-home test. It’s free of tubes, solutions, cassettes, and test strips.I wasn’t always a fan of this Covid-19 test kit. Last year, I initially passed on recommending it due to its mind-boggling $444 starting price, which has since dropped to $394 (and is still expensive). It just felt wrong during a pandemic when millions of people were losing jobs and cutting expenses due to the unpredictable times. It was much wiser to just spend roughly $25 on an at-home test (half of which was covered by insurance) and receive eight free tests per month. Plus, there was always the option to take a free Covid test at a local testing site.However, the Biden administration has suspended its free at-home Covid test program due to a lack of funding from Congress. The federal funding for free Covid testing locations and partial insurance coverage for at-home tests (in addition to free vaccines and medication) are also running out. This might mean that restocking your at-home stash may become more expensive these next few months. Suddenly, investing in a Cue Reader doesn’t feel so outlandish.A Compact and Speedy MachinePhotograph: Cue HealthCue Health's at-home test centers around a small central hub called the Cue Reader, which can detect a virus’ genetic material. Known as a molecular test, it’s typically more accurate than an antigen (also known as a rapid test) and comparable to a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, with the ability to identify small traces of SARS-CoV-2 earlier—potentially even a day or two before you start feeling any symptoms. That can be critical when trying to prevent the spread of the virus. Cue says its test has an accuracy rate of 97.8 percent (just behind the single-use Lucira at-home molecular test, which the company claims is 98 percent accurate). According to this independent study, Cue's at-home molecular test also demonstrated 99.4% accuracy compared to lab-based PCR tests.The Cue Reader is compact and doesn’t look ugly. I keep it on my desk, but I can also see it resting on an entryway table or kitchen counter. It’s easy to travel with too. I threw it in my luggage when I went to California this past summer, but I also stash it in my duffle when I go home to visit my parents. It’s rechargeable, so you don’t have to worry about replacing batteries (I just keep it plugged in at my desk). What I love most about this system is actually taking the test—something I never thought I’d say. Yes, you still need to swab your nostrils, but the rest is just so darn easy and doesn’t feel like a science experiment. There are no tubes of solution. Instead, the Cue Reader handles everything. It works via Bluetooth, so you’ll need a smartphone to use the Reader, but it’s simple to set up. Download the app, make an account, and pair the Cue Reader to your phone. When you’re ready to take a test, open the app for a walkthrough of each step. There are so few steps that it’s easy to memorize—no instruction manual needed. The Reader comes with a few cartridges, and just like how you’d push Super Mario World into the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, you first need to push one of these cartridges into the reader and wait for it to warm up. Once the app says the cartridge is ready, swab your nose with the included wand and insert it into the cartridge. That’s it! After 20 minutes, you can check your results on your phone and, if needed, send the results as a PDF through email or text. Cleanup is also a breeze, though perhaps just as wasteful as other at-home kits—remove the cartridge from the reader and throw it out.